

Atonement by hoppnhorn

Series: [Harringrove Bits & Pieces \[4\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Summary:

Steve finds something mixed in with Billy Hargrove's notes from English class.

Atonement

Author's Note:

- For [avengingbucks](#).

I dunno....let's just call this an impulse write inspired by the amazing [@mulletgrove](#). Slow burn gets me all riled, I needed to write something slightly filthy. Enjoy!

He'd fallen asleep in English, again. One second they'd been discussing the finer points of some play he was supposed to have read and the next the bell is ringing and Steve is jolting in his chair, eyes wild.

He panics for just a moment, thinks that he's back in the tunnels with the kids and death is coming. Death is running towards him at lightning speed.

"Harrington."

Steve jumps a second time when someone touches his shoulder. What's even more shocking is *who* is touching him.

Billy Hargrove.

His face still aches at night because of Billy fucking Hargrove.

"What?" He mumbles, playing off his reaction like he'd been sliding out of his seat to smoothly leave class. Billy isn't convinced. Steve can see it on his face.

"You passed out."

"Yeah, I'm aware. Thanks." He snaps, gathering his backpack. He has no interest in a conversation with the guy who'd beaten him to a pulp. But Billy doesn't back down or walk away. Instead, he holds out a stack of papers.

"You can copy my notes."

Steve blinks up at him in confusion, waiting for the punchline. It never comes. Billy simply widens his eyes and shakes the papers.

“You know, notes? Over Hamlet.”

“Right. Hamlet.” Steve nods, before he hesitantly reaches out and takes the flimsy pieces of notebook paper. They’re hastily torn from the spine, the edges ragged and messy. “Thanks, I guess.”

“Whatever. Just get ‘em back to me.” Billy says, like it’s no big deal. Then he’s walking away, leaving Steve befuddled at his desk.

When he gets home, he goes straight to his room and flops his backpack on the bed. It’s heavy today, like the teachers were loading them up with work so they couldn’t enjoy the last few months of their senior year the way they wanted to: unencumbered. No, instead Steve has three papers to write and two more chapters of Hamlet to read.

He hasn’t even read the first two. With a groan, he looks between the rubrics for the two essays and his battered copy of Hamlet. He picks Hamlet with a sigh, rummaging through his binder for the notes from Billy.

Billy’s handwriting is easily distinguished from his own, his papers slightly smeared from his left hand dragging over the pencil marks. But his letters are neat and readable, unlike Steve’s scribbled scrawl. Steve settles down on his bed with a Coke and Billy’s notes, reading them without actually reading them. He’s more interested in the way Billy’s handwriting slants slightly and his letters are cleaner as they go, moving away from the spine of his notebook. It takes him a moment to realize how *stupid* the observations are and he starts at the beginning of the page all over again.

Billy’s notes are decent. He summarizes, gives a little insight into motivation and symbolism, things that never easily came to Steve when reading. Billy’s voice is strong, confident, like he knows what he’s talking about and has an sturdy opinion. He’s smart, Steve realizes. Smarter than he’d ever let on in public.

He finishes the third page and flips it over, face down with the others, and frowns when he starts the fourth.

It's not in the same handwriting. It's still Billy's, that much is clear, but it's a lot messier, less focused. It looks like it may have even been written on a different day. The pencil is lighter, smeared a lot thinner over the paper until the whole thing looks like one big smudge.

But it's the words that take Steve's breath away.

You don't even know what you do to me, do you? It's so fucking annoying. You sit there and you mess your hair and all the while I'm dreaming of pulling on it, burying my nose in your scent until it's all I know. All I'll ever know.

I hate your stupid polos, you know. They ride up in the back and those little dimples next to your spine make my mouth water. I want to know what they feel like and my hands tingle to touch. I want to smooth my hands over all of you, memorize your skin. Fuck, you really don't know how much I want to taste you. It's cruel, the way you smell after gym with your clean body and wet hair. I fantasize about putting you in my mouth, my knees on the wet tile as your cock fills my throat. It's agony watching you shower, looking at what I can't have but want so badly. You're hung, you bastard. It's fucking cruel.

Steve's heart thunders in his chest, his face so warm he's sure he's beet red. But he can't stop himself from reading, can't stop himself from getting hard in his jeans.

I fucked up your pretty face, I guess I deserve what I get. I guess I deserve to look and never touch. Especially since I already have. Shit, it wasn't for you. That anger wasn't for you. I couldn't sleep for days, you know. All I could see was black and blue.

He has to take a break. Pacing around his room, he lets out a series of noises. They're not exactly screams, but they're not exactly...not. He can't believe what he's reading. He can't stand still, his nerves are firing in all directions and he's spinning.

When he finds his breath again, he falls back onto his bed and starts again.

I hate how many times I've come with your name on my lips.

Steve covers his eyes with a pillow and -this time- lets a scream loose from his lungs. He's hysterical, half laughing half screaming into the soft pillowcase until he's light headed.

Then he's sitting up and gasping for air. And reads more.

I get so hard when I think about you. It's a fucking tragedy. I think about your smirk when we used to play ball. I think about how you'd smirk if I sucked your cock after practice. I wonder how you'd look when I swallowed your come. Because I would. I'm not some prissy girl. I'll take it all down and ask for seconds.

Steve is downright panting. His hands are shaking and his cock is throbbing against his thigh. Pressing a palm to his shaft, he rocks his hips to rut against his hand.

I wonder if you'd fuck me.

"Christ." Steve closes his eyes and moans, his pulse beating hard against his ribs.

Probably not. You're too straight for all that. Too golden. Too pretty.

Steve bites his bottom lip. Fucking another guy had never crossed his mind before. He'd never had the impulse, though he knew it was a *thing* people did. A thing gay men did. Steve wondered if Billy would like it. If *he'd* like it.

You like to fuck the cows that graze the halls. The drooling idiots who line up for you. I can't help but hate them all. Maybe that's why I can't even watch you talk to your ex. I burn too much.

Steve swallows back a little whine. Billy *burns*? For him?

You're a fucking tease. You flirt with her and her new guy. It makes me hope too much. I want to knock his teeth out for laughing at your dumb jokes. I want to pin you up against your locker and suck a mark into your neck so everyone knows you're taken. I want to own you as badly as you own me. Because you own me, asshole. You always did.

The next day, Steve tries his best to act normal when he sits down in class. He takes out his notebook, puts Billy's notes under his paperback, and chews on the end of his pencil as he waits.

He waits and waits until second bell rings. Just as the teacher goes to close the door, Steve hears a familiar voice.

"Mr. Hargrove." The teacher drones, irritated. "You're tardy."

"Couldn't find a pencil." Billy purrs, walking past Betsy somebody. She offers up her pencil and he takes it with a big grin, teeth flashing. Steve's gut churns. When Billy sits down beside him, Steve fights to keep his pulse calm, to manage the hot blush creeping up his chest.

"Hargrove." He murmurs, pulling out the notes to hand them over. Billy glances over and takes the papers. "Thanks."

"Whatever." Billy mutters, opening a folder like he couldn't care less. Steve watches him shuffle the loose paper around, eyes scanning the pages. His hands go still suddenly and Steve watches his face pale. Then slowly, ever so slowly, he picks up the note. *The* note. And he's not breathing. Not really.

Shit. He hadn't given him the note on purpose. Steve wants to run down the hall and stuff his head into a locker. He wants to pull on his hair and let out the nervous butterflies that are battling in his chest. He spends the entirety of class with his eyes superglued to the front of the room. The teacher drones on and on about something. Hamlet maybe. But Steve doesn't hear a word. He's hoping that maybe if he plays dumb, Billy won't think he read it. Maybe he'll pretend it never happened.

When the bell rings, he tries to bolt. God help him, he actually had his shit packed up and ready for a quick getaway. And he makes it too, all the way out the door and halfway to his locker before he's being grabbed from behind.

"We need to talk." Billy's voice is rough in his ear, sending shivers down his spine. Fear and arousal, mixing in a strange hum from deep in his stomach. Billy leads him by his backpack away from the bustle of the halls, out a side door to a parking lot. And then they're alone,

standing in the November cold. Billy backs him into the side of the building with a pointed finger, his voice lowered in a snarl.

“Whatever you think you read—”

“I won’t tell anyone—”

“I’ll fuckin—”

“Just let me—”

“I swear to god—”

“NO.” Steve practically shouts. Actually, he does. Birds flutter from a tree as Billy blinks at him, a frown settling a deep line between his eyes.

“No, what?”

Steve clears his throat, rubbing a hand over the back of his neck. Billy’s eyes search his face and for the first time he sees the fear shining back at him. The vulnerability at what he’s done. What he’s *said*. Steve reaches out and grabs Billy by the collar, reeling him in close. The guy catches himself with one hand on the brick, his face stopping only a few inches from Steve as he gasps a little in surprise.

“No, I didn’t know what I did to you.” Steve whispers. “I didn’t know how badly you wanted me.”

Billy doesn’t move and Steve knows he’s more frightened than ever.

“But now that I do...” He trails his hand down Billy’s open shirt, fingers grazing blazing, hot skin. Billy’s expression melts, his jaw falling open. “I was wondering if you wanted to tutor me in English.”

Billy blinks rapidly.

“Tutor you?”

“Yeah.” He grins at the pulse throbbing in Billy’s neck. “You can come over. We can study.”

Billy's eyes light up and Steve can't help but chuckle.

"You want to study. With me."

"Tonight." Steve blurts, his eyes locked on Billy's mouth. "If you want."

Billy flashes a wicked smile.

"It's a date."